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From: Vanessa Ekins [REDACTED]

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To: Local Government Mailbox

Subject: support for Lismore City Council rate variation

SUPPORT FOR LISMORE CITY COUNCIL SPECIAL RATE VARIATION FOR THE BIODIVERSITY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

Lismore City Councils Environment Committee has lobbied Council since our formation in 2004 for specific funding for environmental restoration projects. Council has responded by developing a Biodiversity Strategy that outlines a program of incentive based opportunities for landholders and other projects such as wild dog control, riparian restoration, weed management and koala habitat corridors. A special rate variation will provide \$500,000 a year to implement the strategy at a minimal cost to ratepayers, \$25 a year for a residential ratepayer.

Over the last 16 years when Lismore City Council has consulted with the community, the natural environment has been an obvious priority. It has therefore been extremely frustrating that less than 0.5% of Councils budget has been directed into environmental projects. The special rate variation is a way forward and has been debated within our community for two years. There is enormous support for the rate variation evidenced by the online petition and detailed submissions from Landcare groups, Friends of the Koala, ecologists and supportive ratepayers.

We need to protect and restore our regions biodiversity which is some of the best in the world. Unfortunately it exists in isolated remnants on private property and it is imperative that these remnants are preserved and linked. The Biodiversity Strategy is an opportunity to achieve this and it can easily be funded with an affordable special rate variation.

Regards

Vanessa Ekins
Chair Sustainable Environment Panel
Lismore City Council